



Windsurfing is a way of life for this Aruban family

Aruba is home to two shining young stars on the Professional Windsurfing Association (PWA) circuit, Quincy Offringa and his younger sister Sarah-Quita. Both have just returned from Spain, where they spent nearly six weeks participating in the professional competitions, plus a “relaxing week” in Bonaire for the Annual Starboard Pro Kids International Windsurfing Tournament.

Both are fine windsurfers, winning international sponsorship from mega windsurfing corporation Starboard, who provides them with equipment, and Neil Pryde, who donates their sails. Sarah-Quita in particular has received worldwide attention as the sixteen-year-old set windsurfing history last year by being the youngest woman to ever to win a gold medal in Women’s Freestyle. She ended the 2006 tour as the second ranked women’s freestyle windsurfer in the world, a feat she accomplished again this year against reigning champion Daida Moreno.

The teens are stoutly supported in their pursuit of the sport by their parents Esther and Ruud. “Everything in our lives revolves around windsurfing right now,” revealed Sarah-Quita. The sport has allowed her to travel internationally meeting people from all over the world, an aspect of it she truly enjoys. Always Esther or Ruud, or both parents accompany her on all these ventures, and will continue to do so, “as long as she wants it,” specified Esther. “Some accuse me of being some sort of “policeman” because I am always there with her for the events, but I see it as helping her, as she does not have to worry about anything but her performance. All her other needs are looked after.” Sarah-Quita agrees that her parents’ support is very beneficial. “It allows me to concentrate and be more focused on the windsurfing. I see the other kids my age coming to the tournaments alone, they often go out and party at night, and then they are not at their best for the competitions, so it definitely gives me an edge and helps me stay focused.”

Esther is also helpful for Sarah-Quita in handling all the press people and paparazzi that are so interested in her right now, something the self-effacing young woman finds makes her uncomfortable. “Being from Aruba and so multilingual always amazes the press people, and so they always want to interview Sarah, because she can converse with them in almost any language,” revealed Esther. She also has been making quite a splash, literally, on the windsurfing scene and has a unique island mystique, so she is fascinating to the European press. Esther has stacks of newspapers with articles about her daughter, and a table full of trophies that she has won. For the last two years, Starboard has used Sarah in their photo shoots for their annual promotional campaigns, which has allowed her to travel to Hawaii and see that part of the world.

Sarah returned from her 2007 competitions in Spain this past week, with a new collection of trophies and new experiences that have made her a bit more perceptive of the ins and outs of the professional circuit. Quincy will travel to Silt, Germany in a few weeks for the final tournament of 2007. Sarah will devote her time to her studies and is majoring in the Sciences; Physics, Chemistry, and Biology, her strong subject. She also confesses to a love for studying French, and asserts that she does not plan to make a career of windsurfing. “Sarah is not “A Terminator,” expressed Esther, “she doesn’t have the killer instinct, which is so much a part of professional competition. She is always smiling, always happy, and likes to make friends and see everyone else happy. She competes because she loves to windsurf and she likes the challenge, the travel, and meeting people. She is doing so well professionally not because she is driven, but because she really has a natural talent.”

“Right now my life is spinning around windsurfing,” stated Sarah-Quita, “everything we do is about windsurfing; every vacation we have taken over the last years is to windsurfing competitions. I don’t mind, I love it and I am not tired of it. If I get tired of windsurfing, I will stop. I don’t see that happening as there is so much you can do with it, there is so much stuff involved in windsurfing. It is like passion, you can’t stop.”